



State of Utah

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF PLANNING AND BUDGET
Resource Development Coordinating Committee

Michael O. Leavitt
Governor

Brad T. Barber
State Planning Coordinator

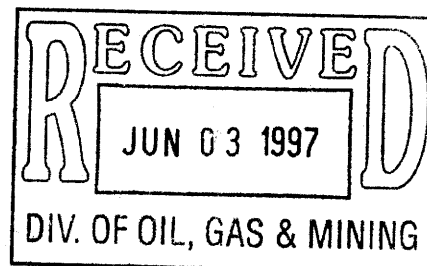
James L. Dykmann
Committee Chairman

John A. Harja
Executive Director

116 State Capitol Building
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114
(801) 538-1027
Fax: (801) 538-1547



May 29, 1997



D. Wayne Hedberg
Division of Oil, Gas & Mining
1594 West North Temple, Suite 1210
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-5801

SUBJECT: Pearl Queen Perlite Mine M/001/027
State Identification Number: UT970422-020

Dear Mr. Hedberg:

The Resource Development Coordinating Committee (RDCC), representing the State of Utah, has reviewed this proposal. The Division of Wildlife Resources comments:

AFFECTED WILDLIFE RESOURCE: The proposed mine location occurs within critical valued mule deer wintering range (11/1 to 5/15) and within nesting habitat for the state threatened ferruginous hawk (4/10 to 7/15) and other raptors (2/15 TO 8-15). Nest sites are critical valued use areas and the ferruginous hawk has been documented nesting in Section 34, T26S, R9W, which is the section immediately NW of the mine site.

PROJECTED IMPACTS: Development of the mine, as well as noise associated with operation and maintenance activities, haulage of mine material to Milford, and increased human activity in the area will result in a net loss of mule deer winter range and raptor nesting habitat. Mule deer are known to make substantially less use of suitable habitat located within a 0.25 mile radius of human development, as compared to non-disturbed areas; the project will likely impact 135 acres of critical valued mule deer winter range.

Also, many raptors, particularly the ferruginous hawk, are sensitive to disturbance and most likely will not nest within 0.5 mile of the mine site, and some may be excluded from nesting up to 1 mile. Selection of a nest site is based upon local prey abundance and security of the nest site, which can be affected by man-caused disturbance within a 0.5 to 1.0 mile radius buffer area surrounding the nest site. Although Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) has significant information concerning raptor nest locations, by far many more nests exist that have yet to be inventoried.

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RECOMMENDED MITIGATION: To minimize impacts to wintering mule deer, we recommend the project proponent enhance 3 acres of adjacent winter habitat for every one acre impacted. Such enhancements should represent vegetation treatments (a combination of chaining, reseeding, and fertilizing) of rangelands adjacent to the project area.

Impacts to raptor nests can be avoided by securing the services of a qualified raptor ecologist during project initiation to inventory and document raptor nesting within a 0.5 to 1.0 mile radius of the project. Construction should not occur within a 0.5 mile radius of any active raptor nest and should not be initiated until after the raptor fledgling period (8/15). The UDWR office in Cedar City (801-586-2455) can be contacted for assistance regarding a raptor inventory.

All topsoil to be disturbed by the project should be stockpiled for later use in mine reclamation. We request that the UDWR office in Cedar City be contacted to assist in developing an appropriate seeding mixture to be used in rangeland enhancements and mine reclamation.

If you have any questions please call Stan Beckstrom at our Cedar City Office (801) 586-2455).

The Committee appreciates the opportunity to review this proposal. Please direct any other written questions regarding this correspondence to the Utah State Clearinghouse at the above address or call Carolyn Wright at (801) 538-1535 or John Harja at (801) 538-1559.

Sincerely,



Brad T. Barber
State Planning Coordinator

BTB/ar